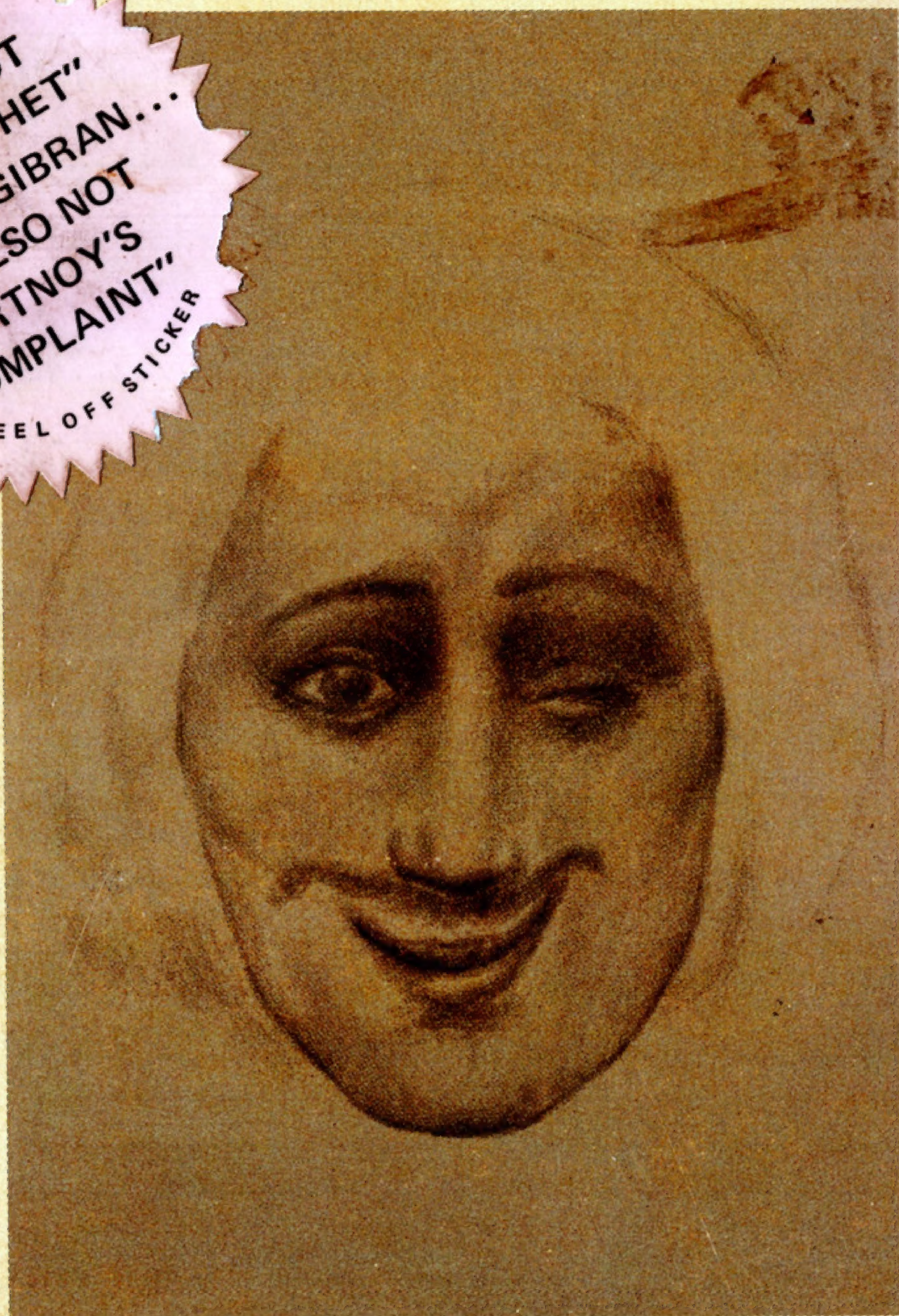


THE PROFIT

KEHLOG ALBRAN

FE:
THIS IS NOT
"THE PROPHET"
BY KAHLIL GIBRAN...
IT IS ALSO NOT
"PORTNOY'S
COMPLAINT"
PEEL OFF STICKER



ALBRAN'S SERIAL

Illustrated by the author with twelve
mystical, hard-to-understand drawings

PRICE / STERN / SLOAN Publishers, Inc., Los Angeles

THE PROFIT

KEHLOG ALBRAN



PRICE / STERN / SLOAN
Publishers, Inc., Los Angeles

The Books of
KEHLOG ALBRAN

- The Wizard • 1947
The Oracle • 1947
The Seer • 1947
The Priest • 1947
The Minister • 1947
The Rabbi • 1947
The Know-it-all • 1947
The Crazy Person • 1947
The Earth • 1947
The Earth Revisited • 1947
Sand and Chow Mein • 1947
The Virgin • 1947
The Virgin Revisited • 1947
The Toad • 1947
The Virgin Toad • 1947
The National Enquirer • 1947
The Expos • 1947



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Man will never penetrate outer space.

— *Albran, August 1942*

Man will never penetrate outer space
without a rocket.

— *Albran, August 1962*

The Author is deeply indebted to Martin A. Cohen and Sheldon Shacket for conceiving this book, writing it and drawing the pictures. Naturally, any mistakes, errors or omissions are the Author's own.

The Author also suggests that, because the twelve original illustrations are very difficult to understand, you don't waste your time trying.

*Kehlog Albran
Fargo, N. D.*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

During much of Albran's lifetime, he was widely thought to be dead. This confusion was the result of the trance-like state Albran affected at public appearances. Conversely, as one might expect of so mystical a figure, after his death many of his followers continued to believe him still alive. Various schools or sects ultimately developed: the Albran Lives School, the Albran Never Lived School and the Two Albrans Faction.

Though a rationale for these conflicting factions can be attributed to Albran's erratic behavior and lifeless appearance in public, in private life Albran was a different person. Given to high camaraderie and practical jokes, he once commented that the Whoopie Cushion had done more for mankind's betterment than Marx, Christ and Oral Roberts rolled into one.

Though a man of spirit, he was also a man of the flesh. He especially enjoyed having a thin stream of his favorite beverage (Dubonnet and Diet-Rite) poured into his

mouth by a lady friend while he lay in a transparent Plexiglas bathtub filled with Blueberry Yoghurt.

To the accusations that he was a whore-monger and womanizer, he frequently replied, "Oh yeah? Prove it." Or, sometimes, "So was Rasputin."

That he is indeed dead is now an undisputed fact, though the date of death remains shrouded in mystery as a result of Albran's own diabolical scheme. His glossy but perfectly preserved body was discovered months or perhaps years later by his literary agent in the tiny, austere room in which he spent his final years. Apparently sensing that the end was near, Albran had hung a five gallon plastic bag of shellac on the ceiling immediately over the chair where he spent so much of his time watching daytime television. As his hand slipped from the arm of the chair, it pulled a wire releasing the shellac which coated his entire body and most of the chair to a depth exceeding a quarter of an inch in many places. Thus, Albran contributed to his own immortality, as well as that of the chair.

INTRODUCTORY WORDS

THE crowds gathered at the foot of the Valley.

Thousands pushed their way through.

The ominous rumbling was heard for miles.

Is he down yet, a merchant selfishly cried.

Where can I see him, an old woman shrieked.

I have waited for him for over one hundred years, a withered man murmured.

The crowd hushed in unison as a glimpse of a figure appeared in the clouded distance.

He is here, they whispered.

He looked almost young, yet his age was impossible to guess.

He was not tall, yet he had many tall ways.

As they stared, he sat upon a rock.
Quietly folding his arms, he began to
speak:

I am here.

I am tired.

But I will answer your questions.

Bring me food, drink, and don't forget a
little gold.

A little silver for an answer.

A drachma for a doubt, a penny for a
thought.

For I am The Profit and what I have
learned has cost me ten lifetimes.

What you are about to learn has cost you
two dollars and fifty cents.



THE QUESTIONS

A man came forward from the crowd and said, May I ask now?

The Master nodded.

Master, what have you learned on the Mountain?

Everything, the Master responded.

Have you knowledge above man?

The Master's eyes slowly focused on the humbled interrogator and a chill came over the crowd.

The Master spoke:

In the scope of the Universe, man knows little.

But in his minute wisdom, he thinks himself a god among the other creatures of this planet.

How wrong he is can be seen by observing the uses to which man puts his tiny ration of intellect.

He gloats over his gold.

And lusts after material possessions.

And all the while his most precious possession slips through his fingers like the waters of a running brook.

He lets go the one thing he cannot nor ever will be able to purchase once it is gone, the precious possession that cannot be borrowed or sold.

Time? Is Time the most precious possession, Master?

No, my son, the Master replied, but you're close.



A scholar then asked:

Could you advise me of a proper vocation, Master?

He then said:

Some men can earn their keep with the power of their minds.

Others must use their backs and hands.

This is the same in nature as it is with man.

Some animals acquire their food easily, such as rabbits, horses and elephants.

Other animals must struggle for their food, like flamingos, moles, and ants.

So you see, the nature of the vocation must fit the individual.

But I have no abilities, desires, or talents, Master, the man sobbed.

Have you ever thought of becoming a stockbroker? the Master queried.



THEN an eccentric looking man said,
Speak to us of Art.

And he said:

It might as easily be said that man could live without Art as that man could live without water.

Look upon the innocent scribblings of little children.

Doubt not that each of us emerged from the womb an artist.

Art is freedom.

That which is called Art, yet is made subservient to commerce is not Art.

That which is called Art, yet is made subservient to a Nation or State is not Art.

That which is called Art, yet is hanging in the Museum of Modern Art is not Art.
That crap my six year old son could do, the Master explained.

WHAT of Facial Hair, the nubile lad asked.

The Master replied:

As maturity encroaches upon adolescence, as the child becomes the man (or ugly woman) he (or she) begins to grow first the downy fuzz and, subsequently, the rich, wiry outcropping that has come to be called Beard.

It is no small coincidence that a great scribe or teller of tales is called by the similar word Bard.

Many an otherwise canny person has fallen upon troubled times by confusing these words.

For it is true that a Bard can have a Beard, but a Beard cannot have a Bard.

One can shave a Beard, and, for that matter, one can shave a Bard.

But having shaved a Beard, it no longer exists.

Whereas having shaved a Bard you continue to have a Bard.

A Beardless Bard.

THEN a person said, Speak to us of Poetry.

And he answered:

There was once a wise poet from the peninsula of Phara.

This peninsula was famous for two things.

It produced either people of incredible stupidity or it produced poets.

Faedil Falzar was the most notable poet ever to come from the region.

He was highly esteemed all over the country.

One day, he travelled to Capez.

There he met a girl who was totally deaf.

He fell in love with her and they were married.

Now, in the town of Capez, women were not encouraged to learn to read, especially deaf women.

So, Faedil Falzar lived the rest of his life under the curse that his most beloved young wife could never know of the

beautiful verse he created, the loveliest of which was this:

Oh, the beauty of the eye
Of my sweet loved one,
Thelma Y.
Who ne'er upon the course of Life
Did I intend for her; sweet wife,
A wind so foul could not erase
The pitious fury of this space,
Between the two annointed lips
And o'er her wide resplendent hips.
That she and I remain as one,
And together we could have much fun.



A woman stepped forward and asked,
What is the strangest day?

Tuesday, the Master explained.

THEN a young traveler said,
Speak to us of Home, Master.

And he answered:

There is nothing so tender as a man's
Home.

Though I have not returned to the place
of my childhood and the treasured mem-
ories of the past, I can envision them
perfectly in my mind's eye.

Yes, I know what Home is.

For there in the far-off valley of Bhagrir,
by the ancient city of Ahdrihl, near the
embankment of Eurice, under the Corpit
cliffs that proudly encroach upon the sea,
in a small humble house across the town
square, next to a towering Cypress, that is
where I was born.

Is it the Cypress with the crooked limb,
Master, that points toward the setting sun
in autumn? the traveler asked.

Yes! Yes! cried the Master.

With the crumbling stone wall leading
down to the bay? the traveler persisted.

Exactly! the Master shouted.

Howard Johnson's! the traveler cried.



AND an orator said,

Speak to us of Silence.

And he said:

Silence can be a valuable tool.

And it can be a great inconvenience.

If a man should ask you a question and you remain silent, he may take it as an insult.

Yet if you answer him, he may take it as a larger insult.

When a person remains silent it provokes mystery, as happened many years ago in Hafnir, near Pez.

In that town there lived a very beautiful young woman.

Her beauty was unsurpassed, but she had one flaw.

For, as long as she had lived she had never spoken a single word.

One day the Calif and a group of citizens called upon her father's house as they had so often in the past years.

They were there to encourage her to speak.

The Calif cleared his throat and asked:

“If an apple tree, heavy with fruit, should

go unnoticed by man, the birds, and the changing seasons, and all of the fruit should rot, never to be tasted, would not this be a Sin?"

She did not reply.

The Calif then asked:

"If a fireplace contained dry wood and kindling, would it not be a Sin never to ignite the fire and fulfill the fireplace's destiny?"

She did not reply.

The Calif then asked:

"If a bird of magnificent plumage should never venture to take to the air, the skies and places distant from its home — would that not be a pitiful waste of Nature?"

It was then that her eyes alighted, and she looked up at the Calif.

Her soft lips smiled and parted, and for the first time in her life she spoke.

What were the words that broke her Silence, Master, the man inquired.

"Your fly is open," he recalled.

AND a scholar asked, Should a man drink wine, ales, and liquors to excess?

He then said:

He who drinks too much wine will feel the price of that ecstasy the next morning.

For exotic liquors must be taken in moderation or all will pay the penalty of misuse.

Man is the only creature to have the ability to create intoxicants.

No other animal has the taste for spirits.

Nature allows no other animal to taste of that pleasure, because nature depends upon all other animals to remain stable and predictable.

Man is the only animal that is allowed the dubious privilege of overindulgence.

Have you ever seen another animal drunk and falling down in the street, sobbing, stinking, and acting totally insane?

No, I haven't, Master, replied the scholar.

Then you haven't met my horse, the Master stated.



THEN an athlete said,
Speak to us of Balance.

He then said:

Man cannot know the meaning of Balance until he has felt the consequences of losing his Balance.

In nature's plan of interdependence, one animal must die so that another animal may live.

This is, of course, the Balance of Nature.

But, more importantly, nature does not waste.

Man, however, causes nature to be unbalanced at times.

Animals that have survived eons become extinct at man's merciless hand.

The ground ceases to bear fruit from man's misuse of crops.

Water becomes dead and lifeless from man's foreign chemicals.

Yes, man has much to learn about Balance.

So, when you see an acrobat struggle to

walk a tightrope, remember that man is not as highly balanced as he looks.

And that he remains the second clumsiest animal on earth.

And what is the clumsiest animal on earth, Master, the man inquired.

Oh, you haven't met my horse either, he replied.



Never forget: The ant can carry eight times its own weight. Or is it nine?



It is impossible to put too much salt on cottage cheese.

THEN a man said:

Speak to us of Expectations.

He then said:

If a man does not see or hear the waters of the Jordan, then he should not taste the pomegranate or ply his wares in an open market.

If a man would not labour in the salt and rock quarries, then he should not accept of the Earth that which he refuses to give of himself.

Such a man would expect a pear of a peach tree.

Such a man would expect a stone to lay an egg.

Such a man would expect Sears to assemble a lawnmower.



Anyone can amass a fortune if he struggles for only that. It is he who struggles to be poor and ends up wealthy with whom we should be annoyed.



A priest asked,
What is Fate, Master?

And he answered:

It is that which gives a beast of burden
its reason for existence.

It is that which men in former times had
to bear upon their backs.

It is that which has caused nations to
build by-ways from City to City upon
which carts and coaches pass, and alongside
which inns have come to be built to stave
off Hunger, Thirst and Weariness.

It is that which has caused great fleets of
ships to ply the Seven Seas wherever the
wind blows.

And that is Fate? said the priest.

Fate . . . I thought you said Freight,
responded the Master.

That's all right, said the priest.

I wanted to know what Freight was too.

A nobleman said.

Speak to us of Fortune.

And he replied:

To those who seek great Fortune, I caution thus:

Imagine a land upon which grow copious stalks of gold, full vineyards of emeralds, munificent orchards of onyx, and but one small patch of early June peas.

In such a land, would not a pauper wear diamonds and a monarch peas?

Would not a princess excuse herself to take a gold?



A sparrow could fly to the moon if it but desired to.



Stealing a Rhinoceros should not be attempted lightly.

A youth asked,
What of Night and Day?

He then said:

The darkness of Night is less in the sky than in the mind. For which of us cannot create the illusion of Night by holding a large hollow gourd over his head?

Far different the Day, the Master continued.

It is beyond man's capacity, even for an instant, to create the appearance of Day.

But the petulant youth persisted:

What if one were to gather a thousand candles in a single room?

The Master responded:

A thousand candles do not equal a Day, even in a small room — say, nine and a half by eleven.

Ten thousand candles, Master?

No.

Twenty thousand candles, Master?

No.

Sixty thousand candles, Master?

No.

One hundred thousand candles, Master?

No.

I give up, the youth exclaimed.

Too bad, the Master shouted, you only missed by six.

A little boy asked me a very perceptive question. I answered him forthwith. Many years later I met him again. He was now a man. He wanted to know the question he had asked so long ago. I told him I had forgotten the question but remembered the answer. To which he said, "Never mind."



The River of Ignorance covers most of my regrets.

Thus toad blossoms in glory, fiery purple
figs, refracting the Earth's light into a
brilliant dawn move me not.

Except sometimes the figs.



Spiders are relatively high in protein, but
they tickle.

A lovely young woman stepped forward.

What of Beauty, Master?

He smiled quietly and said:

Can man's eyes ever remember a sunset
as brilliant as tomorrow's?

As life's tired evening gently descends
upon Everyman's brow, will water ever
taste as sweet as yesterday's?

You see, every second that ticks by is
like the fragrant blossoms of the field,
whose precious offerings are open for all if
only they would stoop to avail themselves
of the treasure.

Beauty is for the few who seek it out.

Are you such a person?

Have you eyes for line and form?

Ears for delicate chords?

A touch for sensitive textures, and a
taste for sweet candies?

Do the poets write for your favor, and
artists labour for your judgment?

Do you collect beautiful objects and
wear fragrant perfumes?

Do you spend your evenings in idyllic
peace and harmony?

Do you enjoy reading beautiful crap like
this?



You ask of emotional flowers, lonely
corn, and orphaned flies.

You have spent your life's hours in
endless pursuit of these enigmas.

Yet, I will have the answer in a moment
of raindrops, a flicker of shadows, or an
Angel's footstep.

If not then, surely by Wednesday.



A youth asked,
Have ye a Plene for a moment's council?
Yes, I replied, but have ye change for a
Kneff?



No man ever drowned in the Sahara.
Except Arthur W. Balzak, D.D.S.

My eyes are beholden to the proud delights life has offered. My awareness never crowded with thoughts of clothed horses or images of nude trees . . . until last night.



The world as seen through the window of an insane asylum is the same world as seen from the window of a dentist's office.



It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle if it is lightly greased.



A condemned man does not request egg salad for his last meal. He also doesn't order Alka Seltzer.



There is no easy way to bathe a hummingbird.

THEN a woman said,
Speak to us of Old Age.

And he answered:

Long ago, Elmir the Curious sailed a small craft up the Euriptic River.

He sought the Elixir of Youth.

It was said that a bush grew somewhere along the river bank, the leaves of which, when cooked for many hours, produced a substance which could ward off the effects of age.

For many years he combed the banks of the Euriptic.

One afternoon he happened upon a Strange Bush.

He picked as many of its leaves as he could carry and sailed back to Califen.

Late that evening he had skimmed off two small vials of the thick and pungent substance.

And he called together the elders of the

city, explaining that he was prepared to sell his Elixir of Youth.

How do we know it will work, the elders asked.

Elmir was incensed by these doubts. As they watched in silence, he gulped one entire vial full.

Though Elmir lived for many years after, he never spoke to the elders again.

Many inquired of his experience, but his lips were sealed.

Then he had *not* discovered the Elixir of Youth, the woman shrugged.

True, the Master replied, but his wealth and fame spread throughout the land.

For he had invented Elmir's Glue.



Even the Thickest pizza on earth will be delivered cold.

SPEAK to us of Wood, a carpenter said.

He then replied:

From a mighty Cypress tree, man can build a ship and sail to distant lands to meet men of many philosophies.

From the same tree, a man can build a sling and destroy an entire village.

From such a tree man could erect a temple, a prison, an altar or a funeral pyre.

Yes, man has built many things in his time on this earth.

But there is one thing no man has ever built.

What is that? the carpenter inquired.

Man has never really built a decent chicken.



AND a teacher said,
Speak to us of Thoughts.

And he answered:

Futile thoughts are like the wind's interpretation of a Loin. Too corrupt to feel the taste . . . too open to approach the Closeness . . . too closed to feel the Openness.

And like that.



The egg has a very fragile skin, yet is hard to the touch. An elephant's skin is very tough in appearance, yet is so sensitive a mosquito bite can irritate it. A feather is soft yet very strong. A piece of steak is expensive.



A man who does not have a dime, does not have a dollar. A man who does not have a penny, does not have a dime. A man who does not have a penny may still drive a Buick.

A maker of lenses asked,
What of Glass, Master?

He then answered:

Glass is one of Earth's miracles, like fire
and water.

It is a solid object, so real, yet so
transparent, it defies the senses.

It is wondrous, though made of the
most common materials, sand and lime.

Yet if one element is changed in quan-
tity or substance, you have not Glass.

If you subtract the sand and use common
earth, you have not Glass.

If you subtract the lime and replace it
with lemon, you have not Glass.

If you subtracted the sand and added
sugar, you would have not Glass.

What would you then have, Master, the
man asked.

Lemonade, the Master replied.

A young beauty said,
Speak to us of Pleasure.

And he said:

A pleasure seeker met an old maiden
near Califen City by the Euriptic River
many years ago.

Much revel was cast to the openness that
evening brought.

Villagers gathered Tapirs and corded
woodlings to show gratitude.

And oh, the Offerings that transpired.

All sat to observe the sound and to hear
the sights of that evening.

Great crowds of peasants as well as
nobles appeared.

Small tents were raised, and great vessels
of ruby wine and heavy ale passed freely
through the throng.

Brass platters heavily laden with fresh
roasted corn, and young capon stuffed with
sweet rice, were served by nubile young
maids.

Musicians strummed harps and wooden

instruments as the drums pounded dance rhythms.

It is said that magical evening actually lasted for over a fortnight.

And then was gone.

The music and the revelry ended one evening as mysteriously as they had begun.

And all that remained was a barren field, its silence broken only by the sound of the wind rustling past discarded Polaroid wrappers.



But those of you who have not received any of Nature's blessings feel not despair.

For even the ugliest woman on Earth may still bear an ugly child.

AND a beggar came forward and asked,
What is Wealth, Master?

The Master spoke:

Gold is not Wealth.

A wealthy man without honor is not a rich man.

A beggar like yourself can be wealthy compared to a rich man without honor.

After all, would you consider a man without honor wealthy, even if his Dinar laid end to end would reach from here to the Temple of Toplat?

No, I wouldn't, the beggar replied.

Why is that? the Master asked.

A Dinar doesn't go very far these days, Master.

Besides, the Temple of Toplat is across the street!



THEN a tall man said,
What of Adherence to Principle, Master?
And he answered:

A diamond is the hardest substance known to man.

Yet a diamond as thin as a reed and as long as a man could be snapped like a twig, because it is very hard and brittle.

It is not flexible and yielding as a blade of grass.

So it is with man.

He must remain flexible, like the blade of grass.

He must bend and yield to earthly pressures.

For the first man to snap under the troubles of the world will be the man who is hard and rigid like the diamond.

And the last man on Earth will be one who can adapt his entire life to the changing winds.

Such a man will have Milhous somewhere in his name, the Master added.

A philosopher stepped forward:

Master, is not a stone a microcosm, like an olive pit?

Recondite, willing to give but little of itself?

Master, a stone may lie in a riverbed for an eon, giving nothing, observing all, wearing smooth, dwindling, slowly diminishing, until at last — nothing.

But where is the stone of eons past?

In what context does it still exist?

Its atoms have spread across the seas.

Is it a stone still, Master, or is it part of us all?

The Master replied:

Do you have a question to ask, or do you want to make a speech?

A quiet woman said,

Speak to us of Virtue.

He then answered.

Goodness and Kindness are popular
Virtues.

Some Virtues are much older.

The serene chaos that is Courage, and
the phenomenon of Unopened Conscious-
ness have been known to the Great World
eons longer than Extaboulism.

Why is that? the woman inquired.

Because I just made that word up, the
Master said wisely.



Arguments with furniture are rarely
productive.



Even the best of friends cannot attend
each other's funeral.



THEN a scholar said,
Speak to us of Language.

And he answered:

I will tell you the story of Calif Cazar.

He was the wealthiest Calif in all Pez.

And, though his wealth was measured by
the cubic yard, he was the loneliest man in
Pez.

For the Calif, though an educated man,
could not speak the language of trees.

What happened to him? the scholar
asked.

The Master responded:

The Calif studied for many years under
the wisest Balsam in the realm.

He read the poetry of the Willows and
memorized untold sixteenth century Cedar
sonnets.

He spoke fluent Spruce.

His Chestnut was impeccable.

And he could converse comfortably in
both Northern and Southern Pine.

Native born Walnuts took him for one of
their own.

I should like to know more of this
brilliant man, the scholar said.

Where may I learn of him?

Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume 26,
pages 119 through 163.

He is written up there, the scholar
asked?

He is written *on* there, the Master
explained.



A stairway to oblivion is better than no
stairway at all.



Who can dispute a mother's love? A
fire's heat? An echo's sound? A house in the
forest and a tent in the desert have loneli-
ness in common unless infected with the
sweetness of love, for love will cover all
with comfort and well-being. Love makes a
King of a pauper, a Woman of a maiden
and a Sex Maniac of an accountant.

A woman asked,
Which way does the Wind Blow?
And he said:
The Wind is invisible but strong, like
Vodka or bad breath.
The Wind is a friend.
The Wind is an enemy.
The Wind is neutral, like Switzerland.
Sometimes the Wind will blow down a
tree.
Other times it won't.
There's just no telling with the Wind.

Which way will the Wind blow tomorrow, the woman persisted.

He answered:
The Wind is free and unpredictable, like
a bird. It is impossible to guess which way
it will blow.

She who would ask such a question
would be a fool, and he who would
attempt to answer it, a greater fool.

I understand, the woman said, but which
way *will* it blow?

North, he replied.



THEN a nobleman said,
Speak to us of Bad Habits.

And he said:

A good habit is the prayer of our desires,
an action that when practiced continuously
becomes ingrained in our nature.

But we must beware of Bad Habits, for
they can easily be formed.

If an idiot were to tell you the same
story every year for a decade, you might
end up believing it through the sheer power
of repetition.

Therefore beware, do not let your body
become trained against itself, as happened
to the man who forced himself to eat
spiders and became unable to satiate his
appetite and died of eating too many
spiders.

You told me that story last year, the
nobleman said.

THEN a poet asked,
What of Miracles, Master?

He answered:

One dawn, after conversing over a jug of
wine with a few followers, I walked
through the forest near Califen.

It was there that my eyes blanched from
the incredible light of the Moon of Suns.

I dreamed of Chords of Serenity bathed
in the halo of a spirited foe.

The Wind was my horse and the Waves
my song in my resplendent effort to
achieve the Supreme State of Existence.

The Master paused and said:
Then came the Miracle.

What Miracle was that, the man asked.

I had a vision of something so incredible
that it could not have happened in this
world.

The vision, Master?

I saw a Sears lawnmower being sold fully
assembled.

A wizedened priest inquired,
Is man eternal, as a mountain?
He replied:

No individual lasts forever, yet man has
lasted until now.

An individual may live six score, yet
mankind has lived for a thousand score or
more.

Therefore I must answer:

Think not of man as a mountain, which
is ageless, and never changing.

But think of man as a mountain of
changes and variations.

Think of man as a temporary mountain.



Beware of a fork in the road or a knife
in the water, or for that matter any Polish
film with subtitles.



A condemned man does not start chain
letters.

A couple, their arms entwined, asked of Love.

He answered:

Oftentimes the cornerstone of man's Love is not the laughter of stones.

Love does not afford the luxury of time to proclaim its allegiance with the stars and moons of Eden.

It is more than time.

Just as slaves approach withered justice, man without Love must face life as a wounded beast accepts the forest.

Love is larger than the forest.

Those who fear Love would fear life.

But those who possess Love need never fear life.

Love is the essence of life.

Love is a sacred purpose of man.

Love is never shoddy or disdained.

Love is all.

Love is wonder.

Love is mystical, quiet and omnipotent.

More than a trillion words in a thousand tongues have been written about Love — but none less meaningful than the 143 on this page.

AND a farmer said,
Speak to us of Wisdom.
And he answered:

Just as the passage of time will answer
the question of Age, the passage of Age will
answer the question of Wisdom.

Man has always sought to discover the
mystery of Wisdom, just as he seeks to
discover the mystery of a rainstorm, or
why a potato is not expensive.

The smallest insect possesses profound
Wisdom.

That small insect knows the secrets of
the earth that man shall never know.

A fish knows the secrets of the sea that
man shall never know.

A bird knows the secrets of the sky that
man shall never know.

And what is that secret, Master, the man
asked.

He replied:

It is this:

All of the creatures of earth must use
their imagination.

For it is imagination that makes a piece

of bread taste like steak, water taste like wine, and worms taste like chicken.

But what about the secret of the bird, the man insisted.

What bird? the Master inquired.



If a goldfish should want a vacation, who would know?



What lives longer? A Mayfly or a Cyprus tree?

If you answer a Mayfly then you are very perceptive; you realize that in time and space, time is relative and the short life of a Mayfly could be mysteriously longer than the life of the mighty Cyprus.

If you answered a Cyprus then you are unimaginative, but correct.



The strength of a thousand windmills in a hurricane is worthless without the grain to be ground. And the water of the world's most powerful dam unharnessed could not light a single bulb.

But, more important than that is: Why am I telling you these things?



A well-dressed woman in her middle years, wearing a beige tailored suit, said:

Speak to us of Carpeting.

And he answered:

Shag is best.

It doesn't show the dirt.

Of course, any deep pile wool will last practically forever.

Wool wears like iron.

Not that some of the synthetics aren't good values, too.

It's really what you like that counts.

It's a matter of taste and what you can afford to pay.



The half-filled glass and the half-empty glass contain the same amount of wine. But the half-empty glass has a fly in it.



No man is worth more than another.
And none more than \$12.95.

A barkeeper said,
Speak to us of Sin.
And he answered:
Many common acts in life are Sins.
Life can be beautiful yet sinful.

Enjoyment is not a Sin in itself, yet the
seeker of enjoyment may cross the path of
Sin many times in his journeys.

Man should remember a few of Nature's
rules and Sin will be thwarted.

What are those rules, Master? the man
asked.

He then said:

Do not go to the Mountain to find the
Valley.

Do not seek in the skies the burrowing
of the mole.

Do not overtip in Spain.



A man innocent of all guilt is guilty of
all innocence. But not vice versa.

THEN a nervous man said,
Speak to us of Patience.

And he said:

If a man did not have time to watch a sunrise, would the sun rise faster to suit him?

If he did not have time to learn music, would the instrument pour forth melodies to appease him?

For every man that is blessed with Patience, there are ten men cursed with impatience.

Such men force Nature to produce instant results.

Such men are not interested in quality, but speed.

They are not interested in revered age-old customs, they want immediate recognition.

And such men usually pay a dear price for their impatience.

I know of a man who was so impatient

that he tried to make love to a virgin while shoeing his horse.

Was not the virgin embarrassed, Master?
the man asked.

Not as much as I — er — the man, the
Master recalled.



THEN an ailing man said,
Speak to us of Healing.

And he answered:

A wound can heal, and that is a miracle.

So too, sometimes, can a physician heal,
and that is an even greater miracle.

Given a choice — and the odds — I would
rather have a wound than a physician.



A young merchant pushed through the throng asking,

What is Money?

The Master spoke:

Do not ply your wares beneath an avocado tree.

Do what you must with forked pleasure but never encrust a seed that is destined to rule the forest of men's minds.

But what has that to do with Money, Master? the young merchant asked.

The elixir of life is like an earthworm's touch to a rose's sweetness or a length of thread as spurned by the very magnetism of Eartzil, the Master replied.

I understand, the young merchant exclaimed.

You do? the Master replied.



AND then a man asked, what of Superstition, Master?

He said:

There is nothing as senseless as frightening Superstitions handed down through the ages.

They keep men shackled to their fears and deny their intellects.

As a man of science, I do not believe one of them.

But, as a man of compassion, I do not deny the right of others to believe them.

And besides, you can never . . .

Iieee! Look out everybody.

There's a black cat.



A five karat diamond set in furnace solder will look cheap.

THEN a bookbinder said,
Speak to us of Paper.

And he said:

Paper is the most useful substance on
Earth.

It is very thin.

Without Paper the scholar could not
accumulate the knowledge of history.

Without it, the very empire of Albania
would have fallen sooner.

And so it is man's great fortune to have
discovered and profited by using Paper.

Were it not for the many great daily
journals published around the World, our
lands would be overrun by trees.



A very wise man purchased a 1947
Plymouth economy sedan, new. He waxed
and polished it, put it up on blocks and
covered it with Cosmoline. Today it is
worthless.

AND a beautiful maiden said,
Speak to us of Ugliness.

He replied:

There was once a man so ugly that all who knew him threw spears at him.

They did not dislike him, as you might think.

They thought he would look better with a few holes.

Even so, the man resented their intrusions.

So he built a suit of armor so invincible that even a spear thrown by the strongest knight in the Kingdom could not penetrate it.

The people never threw spears at him after that because his ugliness was covered by his armor.

He died a lonely man.

SPEAK to us of Cloth, a weaver asked.

The answer followed:

If a bolt of Cloth measures three feet, and its length is a hundredfold of inches, it is merely Cloth.

Even if the fiber has the color of rainbows or the strength of copper wire it still remains — but Cloth.

Cloth is like a man's mind.

It has great promise of beauty, power and feeling.

Yet it is to itself, alas, but a promise, not a reality.

Cloth is nothing more than several yards of thread.

Until it is fabricated and pieced together to make something, it remains Cloth.

Does that mean Cloth is nothing? the weaver said.

It means Cloth is Cloth, he saged.

Though a man may buy the most expensive car in the world, he should still know how to change a tire.



The greatest actor in the world is the male Euphinian termite. Next comes Victor Mature.



It is possible to grow an entire beard in a doctor's waiting room.

AND a merchant asked,
What of Wheels?
The Master replied:
A Wheel is round, much like an apple.
Both have a simplicity in their nature.

A Wheel can rotate, which causes it to
move in a circle.

This I observed while quite young.

Some have yet to learn the wisdom of
the circle.

An apple can fall from a tree and
become unnoticed as it rots and goes
back to earth.

A Wheel can fall from a tree and will be
noticed immediately, for it is not natural
for Wheels to grow on trees.

A cart with four strong Wheels does not
deserve more than a passing glance, but a
cart riding atop four apples would cause
men to wonder.

What is normal to an apple is not normal
to a Wheel.

But both are like circles.

And both are very much alike.

Except for the Apple.

WHAT of Marriage, Master? two young lovers asked.

And he answered, saying:

It is said that man and woman were born to live as one.

Which is why Marriage was created.

Man observed Nature and noticed that certain animals will care for their young mutually.

The male and female White Seal are an example.

Also the Siberian Tiger and Hermit Elk.

Man exhibits the same responsibility as these animals.

That is why he built great Zoos.

But some still ask when is the best time to marry.

My reply is this:

A field ripe with clover, pomegranates and figs does not require the Archangel to determine where a canine hath dirtied.

THEN an old woman said,
Speak to us of Black Magic, Master.

He then replied:

As a youth I passed an old Orphanite
travelling toward Carthage.

He was a sorcerer who practiced Falien-
tography, and had mastered arts as black as
carbon.

To prove his skill he changed a tree frog
into an apricot, a feather into a pineapple,
and a butterfly into a ham.

Did that satisfy your doubts? the woman
asked.

No, not really, but we had a grand
breakfast, the Master recalled.



A man who cannot carry his own weight
cannot carry a Volkswagen.

THEN a young man said,

What of Sugar, Master?

He replied:

There is nothing on earth as sweet as Sugar.

Sugar has made kings and brought great expeditions to explore the world.

America was discovered in search of India where Sugar could be traded for precious articles.

Throughout history man has used Sugar to build empires, and some peoples have used Sugar as money.

You're wrong, Master, everything you have said about Sugar really applies to salt, not Sugar.

It's in all of the history books.

Oh, *that's right*, the Master replied.

Another young man then asked,

But what of Salt, Master?

He replied:

There is nothing on earth as salty as Salt.

Salt has made kings and brought great

expeditions to explore the world.

America was discovered in search of India where Salt could be traded for precious articles.

Throughout history man has used Salt to build empires, and some peoples have used Salt as money.



My morning star coloured by the gelatin effect of the hazed hue precipitator, known to many as Pophx and to others as Mdth. But to most as Ropltz.

This was an unspeakable truth.



A pound of feathers weighs more than eight ounces of lox but doesn't cost \$6.00.

THEN a silversmith said:

Speak to us of Silver.

And he answered, saying:

Some men have not the desire of Silver
for their greed burns with want of gold.

These men are shrewd.

Some men desire not even gold for they
covet platinum.

These men are cunning.

Yes, and there are men to whom plat-
inum is insufficient for they long after
diamonds.

These men are greedy.

Then there are men who long for Gal-
axies, Condominiums and Bernard Buffet
reproductions.

These men are Americans.





TELL me, Master, a short rabbi asked, Why doesn't a nice person like you have a wife?

He then said:

I have studied philosophy for many years, and through my travels I have communicated and meditated with nature. I have acquired many beautiful possessions of nature by opening my mind to the natural beauty of the Earth. I have dedicated my life to uncovering the mysteries of life, and the unknown. Through this dedication I have acquired sublime knowledge and profound wisdom. Therefore one could actually say that I am married to the desire to achieve wisdom. I am married to many goals and divine ambitions.

In that case, the rabbi responded, have I got a girl for you!

The Master then clopped the rabbi in the head.

What was that for, Master? the rabbi asked.

That was for trying to introduce a cheap Jewish joke into a non-denominational book, he replied.

AN old man in pain asked what of Medicine? I respectfully answered thus, "To some, pain is a curse and is annoying." This is understandable, because the mind creates pain. Some simple thinkers say this is not true, but the proof is obvious, Medicine is man's way to fool the mind and disguise the pain. To make the pain more bearable and in some instances to make the pain almost pleasurable.

Nature has given us the most exotic of gifts in the form of powerful extracts of poppies and herbs. Yet these beneficial gifts can turn into a weapon in the hands of the foolish. That is why the wise person should look at any medicine as a crutch, to be used only as an absolute last resort.

Or when bored to tears.



A man asked,
What of Ignorance, Master?

He then said:

If every man was a genius, there would be no idiots, and no gauge for the intelligence of man.

For every ignorant ill-bred man, there exists an intelligent, well-bred man. Each needing the other. Each dependent upon the other.

Remember, unless you're buying a car there is no shame in being ignorant.

And if you are married, there exists no comfort in being intelligent.



I have never met a man taller than a tree,
nor shorter than a Tappan range.

AND what of Death? an old man asked.

He then said:

Through the ages wise men have explained Death.

Each had a different explanation. Each was right. Each was wrong.

And what of your explanation, oh Master? he asked.

The Master replied:

Death is like taking a mule to Caliphen City for a vacation during August.

And how is that? the man asked.

Extremely crowded, he replied, and very boring.



A man asked
What of Garbage?

The Master replied:

There is nothing that nature creates that
could justly be called garbage.

All other animals use nature wisely, save
for man.

He alone has the capacity to create garbage.

Earth is not an enemy to man. Earth is
the mother to practically every living thing
on this planet.

Therefore, gentle reader, do not litter
or create garbage. And do not discard this
book in a manner that would cause others
harm, like giving it to a small child.

Rather, dispose of it properly - in an
unmarked trash shredder receptacle or ceramic kiln. But above all, let not a friend
read it.

Why is that, Master? the man asked.

Because he should buy his own! the
Master replied.

A merchant stepped forward, and said,
Speak to us of Fair Trade.

And he said:

A farthing for thy soul, a potato for thy
pride, a crippled grasshopper for your
one-legged goldfish.



Never take pride so seriously that its
meaning becomes foreshadowed by man's
will to pretend understanding.

Remember, the proud lettuce in all truth
cannot withstand the aggression of an adult
carrot.



If a wealthy man dying of thirst would
pay \$10,000 for a glass of water, would he
pay \$1.49 for a glass of Manischewitz?

When making business, a man does not show a pointed interest in matters of fastidiousness unless he provokes in himself the honesty of Neptune.

Or at least Saturn.



The Potato Virgins agree on that which my heart spake proudly of in Jest. Go not to the hour of disease to mend thy insurmountable cleavage. But, altogether arise to the undercurrents love surreptitiously anoints the souls of young lovers. And approaches old men who forgot how. And why.



Even the tallest man on earth cannot walk through the Grand Canyon without feeling conspicuous.

I observed two enamoured doves locked in a mystical embrace as if their very souls were cast upon the meadow as one.

What is this, that causes the two to join their palms as one?

Is it Love or is it merely horsing around?



A sense of humor is not related to a sense of smell. A sense of smell is no standard of intelligence. Intelligence alone will not make a man wealthy. Yet a wealthy man cannot purchase a sense of humor. So, a sense of humor is actually a blessing. Yet it remains true that it takes an infinite amount of blessings to pay one gas bill.

The sun will rise tomorrow and the next day. A man's beard will lengthen with the hours that pass, and though man may walk the face of the moon by sunlight, he will not walk the face of the sun by moonlight, because of the NASA cutbacks.



The Earth is like a grain of sand, only much much heavier.



Never underestimate the power of a single fruit. Were it not for the grape, wine would not have been discovered, and the great Roman Empire might have lived for an additional three years.

A peanut does not have eyes, ears, or any intelligence. It also does not have wings.



I have seen the future and it is very much like the present. Only longer.

If someone should find a wallet containing a boiled potato, a tooth, and a laundry ticket, should he be considered lucky?



A beautiful woman does not really need to know how to change a crankshaft.

I ran to the High Spot to think of the oncoming perversions and prevailed upon my subconscious to deliver artifacts of a blighted perception. But, I was not asleep, therefore . . . awake. And not alone.



A parent is a child, the child a parent.
 A mother is a daughter, a father is a son.
 A father is the son of a son,
 the mother is the daughter of a maid.
 A maid is the daughter of a virgin.
 A virgin is the daughter of a child.
 A turtle is a grasshopper.
 A grasshopper is a worm.
 A worm is icky.

AND an artist said,
 Speak to us of Praise.

He then said:

Spinning Gold from words of Praise does
 not require a maiden's hand, or the caco-
 phonous stare of a blind frog.

But it would be a nice gesture.



A beautiful and very rich lady asked a
 poor man to carry a load of wood up a very
 steep hill.

After he had completed his task the
 woman gave him no money or thanks.

I asked him,

Why did you labour for that woman for
 such inconsiderate treatment?

To which he replied:

What did I have to lose?

THE time had come for him to take his leave of this most mysterious of cities, a city in which he had seen the rise of four thousand suns.

A cloud of dust arose from the mountains upon the distant horizon.

The people who had gathered knew — each and every one of them — what the dust meant.

It was the coach which would bear the Master away from them, not just for now, but for all time.

A mist formed in the eyes of the women and children.

More than one stalwart man could be seen to brush away an unremitting tear.

And now the coach was present, the

horses quivering in anticipation of the long drive that awaited them.

The Master's foot ascended the first step of the coach.

The door latch was opened.

Though none could speak, the words were written upon their faces:

A parting wisdom, please, we beseech you with all the earnestness our heavy hearts can muster.

Please, Master, please . . . a word? . . . a smile? . . . a simple gesture? . . .

The Master reflected deeply.

And with a hand upon the coach door he turned to them one final time.

And with his remaining hand, he gestured.



He who has read this book and understood it should read no other.

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ABOUT THE TYPE

Edna Mae Farnsworth designed much of the type used in this book.

A lifelong devotee of typography, Miss Farnsworth is generally credited with the invention of the serif, prior to which I's and l's were frequently confused.

In addition to type, Miss Farnsworth designed a number of lovely Afghans and scarves.

She spent most of the Summer of 1921 in Europe.



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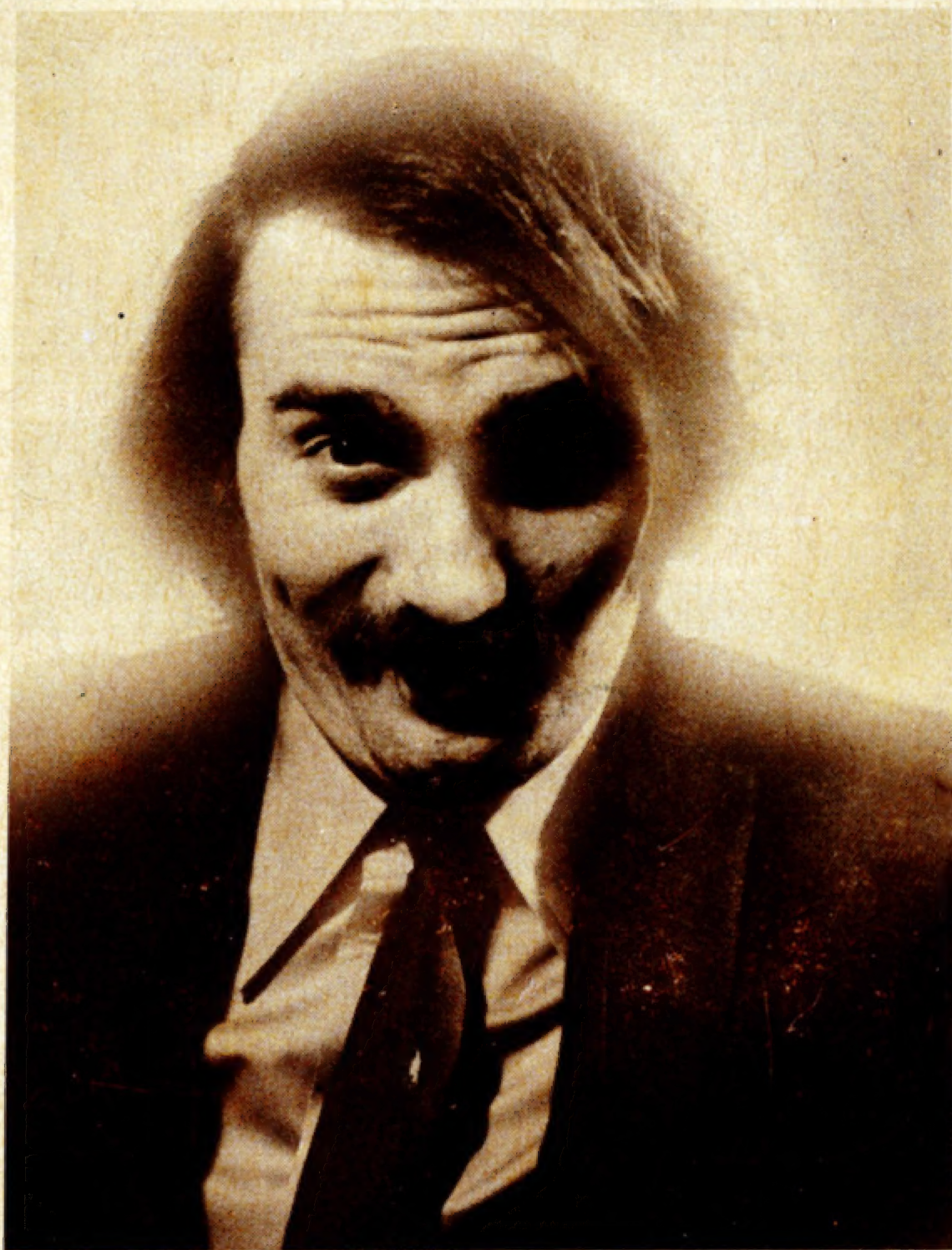


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KEHLOG ALBRAN

1933—1927

The author was a lifelong member of the Diner's Club and did much of his most creative writing there. His style was that of a man with a much larger brain. Born in Brest-Litovsk, much of his earlier work was published in his native dialect in which language he is still greatly revered. In an area embracing several hectares in that city, he is still looked upon as a demi-god. His drawings and paintings have been exhibited in Quito, Ecuador. His artistic and literary style have been compared by Chester Gould to the work of Ernest Bushmiller and by Bushmiller to the work of Gould. Upon moving to America, his great desires were to write in his adopted language, English; to make a million dollars, and to retire from pseudo-philosophy so that he might open a chain of laundromats. It is the world's loss that he never succeeded in writing in English.